Commemorative postage stamp on Saint Annamacharya

2232. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether any request from the Government of Andhra Pradesh has been received for release of Commemorative stamp on Saint Annamacharya on his 500th Vardhanthi;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the action taken by his Ministry thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A request for release of a commemorative stamp on Saint Annamachary's SOOth^Vardhanthi to be celebrated on 29th March 2003 at Hyderabad was received from the Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh.

(c) The proposal was considered but could not be approved keeping in view existing guidelines for issue of such stamps. However, Issue of a special cover with special cancellation which are also of philatelic value has been proposed to mark the occasion.

Infonnation and Communication Networic with PSTN

2233. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the existing guidelines for closed upper groups interconnect do not permit information and communication network with PSTN network; and

(b) if so, the reasons for not allowing the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRIMATI SUMITRA MAHAJAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Closed User Group (CUG) networks are strictly meant for internal usage of an organization. Interconnection of CUG network with Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) will result in bypass of Long Distance/International Long Distance Traffic and thus causing revenue loss to both Government as well as Telecom. Service Providers and uneven level playing field.

Amendment in Indian Postal act

2234. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce any amendments in the Indian Postal Act;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to privatise the communication sector by introducing international courier services;

(d) whether Government are experiencing any inefficiency in the existing postal sector whether Government think that any changes required such privatisation to improve the efficiency;

(e) whether it is a fact that the entrance of the international courier agencies adversely affects the internal security of the country; and

(f) the number of post offices proposed to be opened and upgraded in Kerala during the coming year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SANJAY PASWAN): (a) to (d) Indian post Office (Amendment) Bill, 2002 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 17.5.02 further to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898 in order to bring the provisions of IPO Act 1898 uptodate, in consonance with development in Information Technology and in field of communication and enable the Department of Posts to provide modern services products to meet the expectations of the customers. The Bill has been Introduced not as a